

## Claims

1. (Original claim) A method of filing a received e-mail message, the method comprising:
  - reading a self-describing text-based data structure within the text body of the received e-mail message;
  - comparing the self-describing data structure to a plurality of pre-stored text-based data structures; and
  - storing the received data content of the e-mail message or a significant part thereof in a selected data folder to which the received text-based data structure corresponds,
  - the method requiring no external access to data to carry out the reading, comparing and storing steps.
2. (Original claim) A method according to Claim 1, further comprising:
  - creating a new data folder if the received text-based data structure does not correspond to any of the plurality of pre-stored text-based data structures; and
  - the storing step comprises storing the received e-mail message or a significant part thereof in the new data folder.
3. (Original claim) A method according to Claim 2, further comprising:
  - adding the received text-based structure to the plurality of pre-stored text-based data structures; and
  - associating the received text-based structure with the new folder.
4. (currently amended) A method according to claim 1, wherein the received text-based data structure comprises a plurality of data sets, and the storing step comprises:
  - storing each of the different data sets as a record that can be separately manipulated in the selected folder.
5. (currently amended) A method according to claim 1, wherein the received text-based structure causes an interaction action to occur with previously received or existing data.

6. (currently amended) A method according to Claim 5, wherein the interaction action comprises the storing step including overwriting a data set of a text-based data structure previously stored within the folder with a data set of the received text-based data structure.

7. (currently amended) A method according to Claim 5, wherein the received e-mail specifies matching data and certain fields of the data structure, and the interaction action comprises:

comparing the matching data for the certain fields of a previously stored data set; and  
interacting with the data set where the data stored in the certain fields matches the matching data.

8. (original claim) A method according to Claim 7, wherein the interacting step comprises updating the data set where the data stored in the certain fields matches the matching data.

9. (original claim) A method according to Claim 8, wherein the updating step comprises deleting the data set.

10. (original claim) A method according to Claim 9, wherein the updating step further comprises inserting the data set provided in the received e-mail in place of the deleted data set.

11. (currently amended) A method according to Claim 5, wherein the storing step comprises overwriting a text-based data structure previously stored within the folder with the received text-based data structure.

12. (currently amended) A method according to Claim 1, further comprising:  
using the self-describing data structure to create a new definition for a folder; and  
applying that new definition to a new folder or an existing folder.

13. (original claim) A method according to Claim 12, further comprising updating a definition of an existing data folder with the new folder definition if the received text-based data

structure does not correspond to any of the plurality of pre-stored text-based data structures and an identifier of the data structure matches that of the existing folder.

14. (currently amended) A method according to Claim 1, wherein the storing step comprises storing the received data in a database and the method further comprises using database data handling techniques to manipulate at least part of the stored data.

15. (currently amended) A method according to Claim 1, further comprising sorting contents of the selected folder according to a user-selected characteristic.

16. (currently amended) A method according to Claim 1, further comprising writing the text-based data structure to a database file external to an e-mail function by which the data structure was received.

17. (original claim) A method according to Claim 16, wherein the data structure comprises a processing command for controlling an application which has access to the external database file.

18. (currently amended) A method according to Claim 1, wherein the data structure comprises a processing command for controlling any aspect of the method.

19. (currently amended) A method according to Claim 1, wherein at least a portion of the text-based data structure is encoded and the method further comprises decoding the portion of the received text-based data structure before the comparing step.

20. (original claim) A method according to Claim 19, wherein the received e-mail message contains an encrypted licence from a sender authenticating the sender.

21. (original claim) A method according to Claim 20, wherein the encrypted licence comprises the self-describing text-based data structure.

22. (currently amended) A method according to Claim 1, further comprising comparing a current date with the date of receipt of a previously filed e-mail, and removing the previously filed e-mail if a time period between the dates exceeds a predetermined amount.
23. (original claim) A method according to Claim 22, wherein the received e-mail message comprises an expiry time and the removing step comprises removing the previously filed e-mail if the expiry time has lapsed.
24. (currently amended) A method according to Claim 22, wherein received e-mail comprises a deletion instruction and the comparing and removal steps are carried out on reading of the deletion instruction.
25. (currently amended) A method according to Claim 1, wherein the text-based data structure comprises a data structure written in a command language such as XML.
26. (original claim) A method according to Claim 25, wherein the text-based data structure comprises an XML schema and the e-mail message further comprises data conforming to the XML schema.
27. (original claim) An apparatus for filing a newly received e-mail message, the apparatus comprising:
- a store of text-based data structures, each text-based structure corresponding to a particular e-mail folder;
  - reading means for reading a self-describing text-based data structure within the text body of the newly received e-mail message;
  - a comparator for comparing the received self-describing data structure to each of the plurality of pre-stored text-based data structures; and
  - filng means for filing the received e-mail message in a selected folder to which the received text-based data structure corresponds,
- wherein the operation of the apparatus in filing a newly received e-mail requires no external access to data.

28. (original claim) An apparatus according to Claim 27, wherein the reading means, the comparator and the filing means comprise an e-mail management application and a plug-in.

29. (original claim) A method of a recipient processing a received e-mail to cause data interaction; the method comprising:

reading a text-based data structure within the text body of the received e-mail message;  
identifying some pre-stored data of the recipient by use of the data structure;  
causing an interaction to occur with the pre-stored data, the interaction being determined by the contents of the received e-mail.

30. (original claim) A method according to Claim 29, wherein the interaction is determined by the text-based structure.

31. (currently amended) A method according to Claim 29, wherein the e-mail comprises a data payload conforming to the data structure and the causing step comprises an interaction between the pre-stored data and the received data payload.

32. (original claim) A method according to Claim 31, wherein the interaction comprises overwriting the prestored data with the payload data.

33. (currently amended) A method according to Claim 29, wherein the interaction comprises deleting the pre-stored data.

34. (original claim) An apparatus for processing a received e-mail to cause data interaction; the apparatus comprising:

reading means for reading a text-based data structure within the text body of the received e-mail message;

identifying means for identifying some pre-stored data of the recipient by use of the data structure; and

interaction means for causing an interaction to occur with the pre-stored data, the interaction means being arranged to be controlled by the contents of the received e-mail.

35. (original claim) A method of updating a remote data structure or process, the method comprising:

reading a text-based processing instruction within the text body of a received e-mail message;

accessing pre-stored data relating to the remote data structure or process;

updating the pre-stored data in accordance with the text-based processing instruction to effect control.

36. (original claim) A method according to Claim 35, wherein the updating step comprises updating a sender-defined database on a recipient's computer.

37. (original claim) A method according to Claim 35, wherein the updating step comprises updating a functional capability of a recipient's program;

38. (original claim) A method according to Claim 35, wherein the updating step comprises updating the executable code of a program provided at the recipient.

39. (original claim) A method according to Claim 35, wherein the updating step comprises issuing commands to a program provided at the recipient.

40. (original claim) A method according to Claim 35, wherein the updating step comprises issuing commands indirectly to other programs.

41. (original claim) A system for updating a remote data structure or process, the system comprising:

reading means for reading a text-based processing instruction within the text body of a received e-mail message;

accessing means for accessing pre-stored data relating to the remote data structure or process;

updating means for updating the pre-stored data in accordance with the text-based processing instruction to effect control.

42. (original claim) A method of filing content of a received instant messaging communication, the method comprising:

reading a self-describing text-based data structure within the text body of the received instant messaging communication;

comparing the self-describing data structure to a plurality of pre-stored text-based data structures; and

storing the received data content of the instant messaging communication or a significant part thereof in a selected data folder to which the received text-based data structure corresponds,

the method requiring no external access to data to carry out the reading, comparing and storing steps.

43. (original claim) A method of updating a remote data structure or process, the method comprising:

reading a text-based processing instruction within the text body of a received instant messaging communication;

accessing pre-stored data relating to the remote data structure or process;

updating the pre-stored data in accordance with the text-based processing instruction to effect control.

44. (original claim) A method of a recipient processing a received instant messaging communication to cause data interaction; the method comprising:

reading a text-based data structure within the text body of the received instant messaging communication;

identifying some pre-stored data of the recipient by use of the data structure;

causing an interaction to occur with the pre-stored data, the interaction being determined by the contents of the received instant messaging communication.

45. (new) A method of filing a received e-mail message, the method comprising:
- reading a self-describing text-based data structure within the text body of the received e-mail message;
  - comparing the self-describing data structure to a plurality of pre-stored text-based data structures;
  - if a corresponding pre-stored text-based data structure has been determined, storing the received data content of the e-mail message or a significant part thereof to a selected data folder associated with the corresponding text-based data structure;
  - if a corresponding pre-stored text-based data structure has not been determined:
    - creating a new data folder;
    - storing the received e-mail message or a significant part thereof in the new data folder;
    - adding the received text-based structure to the plurality of pre-stored text-based data structures; and
  - associating the received text-based structure with the new folder,
    - wherein the method requires no external access to data to carry out the reading, comparing, creating and storing steps.

46. (new) A method of filing a received e-mail message, the method comprising:
- reading a self-describing text-based data structure within the text body of the received e-mail message, the received e-mail specifying matching data and certain fields of the data structure;
  - comparing the self-describing data structure to a plurality of pre-stored text-based data structures;
  - storing the received data content of the e-mail message or a significant part thereof in a selected data folder to which the received text-based data structure corresponds,
    - wherein the storing step causes an interaction action to occur with previously received or existing data in the selected data folder, the interaction action comprising:
      - assessing the matching data for the specified certain fields of a previously stored data set; and

interacting with the data set where the data stored in the specified certain fields matches the matching data,

and wherein the method requires no external access to data to carry out the reading, comparing and storing steps.

47. (new) A method of filing a received e-mail message, the method comprising:

reading a self-describing text-based data structure within the text body of the received e-mail message;

comparing the self-describing data structure to a plurality of pre-stored text-based data structures;

storing the received data content of the e-mail message or a significant part thereof in a selected data folder to which the received text-based data structure corresponds,

wherein the storing step causes an interaction action to occur with previously received or existing data in the selected data folder, the interaction action comprising:

overwriting a text-based data structure previously stored within the folder with the received text-based data structure;

and wherein the method requires no external access to data to carry out the reading, comparing and storing steps.

48. (new) A method of filing a received e-mail message, the method comprising:

reading a self-describing text-based data structure within the text body of the received e-mail message;

comparing the self-describing data structure to a plurality of pre-stored text-based data structures;

if a corresponding pre-stored text-based data structure has been determined, storing the received data content of the e-mail message or a significant part thereof in a selected data folder to which the received text-based data structure corresponds;

using the self-describing data structure to create a new definition for a folder; and

updating a definition of an existing data folder with the new folder definition if the received text-based data structure does not correspond to any of the plurality of pre-stored text-based data structures and an identifier of the data structure matches that of the existing folder;

wherein the method requires no external access to data to carry out the reading, comparing and storing steps.

49. (new) A method of filing a received e-mail message, the method comprising:
  - reading a self-describing text-based data structure within the text body of the received e-mail message;
  - comparing the self-describing data structure to a plurality of pre-stored text-based data structures; and
  - storing the received data content of the e-mail message or a significant part thereof in a selected data folder to which the received text-based data structure corresponds, the selected data folder being a database file residing locally and externally to an e-mail function by which the data structure was received,
  - wherein the method requires no non-local access to data to carry out the reading, comparing and storing steps, and
  - wherein the data structure comprises a processing command for controlling an application which has access to the local database file.
50. (new) A method of filing a received e-mail message, the method comprising:
  - reading a self-describing text-based data structure within the text body of the received e-mail message, at least a portion of the self-describing text-based data structure being encrypted;
  - decrypting the encrypted portion of the self-describing text-based data structure, the encrypted portion comprising an encrypted licence from a sender of the e-mail, the licence authenticating the sender and including the at least a portion of the self-describing text-based data structure;
  - comparing the decrypted self-describing data structure to a plurality of pre-stored text-based data structures; and
  - storing the received data content of the e-mail message or a significant part thereof in a selected data folder to which the received text-based data structure corresponds,
  - wherein the method requires no external access to data to carry out the reading, comparing and storing steps.

51. (new) A method according to Claim 50, further comprising using the licence details to carry out an authentication of the sender.

52. (new) A method of filing a received e-mail message, the method comprising:  
reading a self-describing text-based data structure within the text body of the received e-mail message;

comparing the self-describing data structure to a plurality of pre-stored text-based data structures, including comparing a current date with the date of receipt of a previously filed e-mail in a selected data folder to which the received text-based data structure corresponds;

storing the received data content of the e-mail message or a significant part thereof in the selected data folder; and

removing the previously filed e-mail if a time period between the dates exceeds a predetermined amount,

wherein the method requires no external access to data to carry out the reading, comparing and storing steps.

53. (new) A method of a recipient processing a received e-mail message to cause data interaction; the method comprising:

reading a text-based data structure within the text body of the received e-mail message, together with a data payload conforming to the text-based data structure;

identifying pre-stored data of the recipient by use of the read text-based data structure; and

causing an interaction to occur between the pre-stored data and the received data payload, the interaction comprising an action of overwriting the prestored data with the payload data and being determined by the contents of the received e-mail.